LATE TESTIMONY



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February 1, 2012

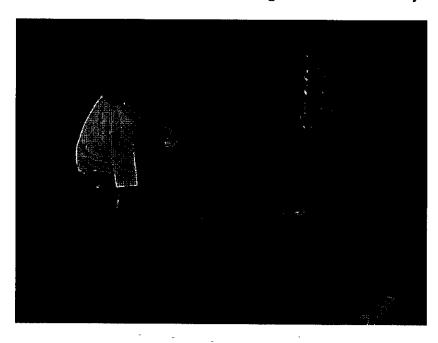
HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1747 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Room 312 8:00 AM

Chair Tsuji, Vice Chair Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

I am Warren Watanabe, representing the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.



HFBF is in strong support of HB 1747, appropriating funds for dog detector positions in HDOA.

Walter Bright Control

Several years ago, Maui was fortunate to have a detector dog. The dog supplemented inspectors. The detector dog teams monitored 546 flights with 122,745 passengers and intercepted 1,747 agricultural commodities, 71% of which were not declared by passengers. In one case persimmons infested with mealybugs not known to Hawaii were detected by the dog. As many of you know Maui is known for persimmons in the fall so this could have had major impacts on the industry. During the time, passengers were comfortable with the detector dog and supportive of the use of the dog by the State to keep alien pests out of the State.

Flights from Guam pose significant threats our island environment. Recently there have been many reports of snakes. Their presence provides evidence that existing methods are insufficient to protect our islands from this threat. The success rate of brown tree snakes in taking over environments make it imperative that preventive measures must be put into place. Escapes of these snakes in Hawaii with no predators will be devastating.

We respectfully urge your strong support of this measure. Past experience proves it is an efficient use of resources. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important matter.

LATE TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY

Committee on Agriculture Rep. Clift Tsuji, Chair Rep. Mark Hashem, Vice Chair

Wednesday February 1, 2012 TIME: 8:00 am PLACE: Conference Room 312

RE: HB 1747 - Relating to Invasive Species

Chairperson Tsuji, Vice-Chair Hashem and Committee Members,

My name is Phyllis Shimabukuro-Geiser and I am testifying as a resident of Hawaii. I support HB 1747 concerning appropriations for the detection of brown tree snakes.

I have personally witness the danger and distruction of the brown tree snake in Guam. I saw the snakes wrapped around fencing and gates of private property, specially the entrance to Guam's sole egg farm during a farm visit. I also toured the Guam Department of Agriculture and saw many large freezers filled with hundreds of brown tree snakes that the local department captured as part of their surveillance program. Besides the monsoons, the snake's impact on human welfare and agriculture is a major deterrent to Guam's sustainability and food security. Hawaii is at risk without adequate detection due to the frequency of air travel from the region.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testify.



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TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2012
8:00 AM
ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 1747 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chairpersons Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 1747. The purpose of this Act is to make an appropriation to the department for the funding of three detector dog positions. We strongly support the intent, but suggest the language of this bill be merged with the language of HB 1943 and offer an HD1 for your review.

The Hawaii Detector Dog Program (HDDP), which began operations in November 1989, was shutdown at the end of June 2009. The remaining personnel were transferred to other inspector positions within HDOA, and the remaining detector dogs were retired and placed in appropriate homes within the State. This was due in part to a 27-percent reduction in State's general funded support to the department that was a direct result of the economic downturn in Hawaii's revenue forecast prior to the end of the State's fiscal year 2009.

On a daily basis there are regularly scheduled commercial as well as military flights that arrive in Hawaii throughout a 24-hour period; therefore, the re-instatement of



the HDDP is needed to address the anticipated military build-up in the Marianas. In FY09, commercial and private flights amounted to 1,137 aircraft inspected upon arrival, resulting in the clearance of about 25,000 items that underwent visual inspection. As a result of the future military build up in Guam, there is a critical need to secure funding support for HDOA to re-establish the HDDP to effectively screen arriving aircraft and ships as well as associated cargo for the presence of BTS from high-risk areas. In addition, any remaining funding support will also be needed for HDOA to further augment the rapid response program for BTS and other snake sighting reports before a snake population becomes established in Hawaii.

Due to the fiscal instability of federal programs in Guam that provide the first line of defense with barriers and interdiction efforts to minimize the spread beyond Guam, it is now more urgent for Hawaii to bolster our prevention efforts to keep the Brown treesnake out of Hawaii. As such, we are requesting the re-establishment of the detector dog program to not only assist us in BTS interdiction efforts, but also to minimize the smuggling of illegal animals and contraband. There are vacant federal detector dog positions, however, we would like to have half of the salaries be funded from the Agriculture Development and Food Security Special fund or from general funds to maintain the proper nexus with the federal grant.